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RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L JERUSALEM 001360

SIPDIS

NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE AND IPA, NSC FOR SHAPIRO/KUMAR

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/05/2019

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [PHUM](#) [KPAL](#) [KWBG](#) [SCUL](#) [IS](#)

SUBJECT: GOI RENEWING CLOSURE ORDERS ON EAST JERUSALEM INSTITUTIONS

REF: A. JERUSALEM 293

[¶](#)B. 08 JERUSALEM 2321

Classified By: DPO Greg Marchese, for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

[¶](#)11. (C) ConGen contacts report that at least one of eight Jerusalem-based Palestinian institutions closed by the GOI in 2001 has received another six-month renewal of the closure order, and others expect to receive similar notices in the coming days. Taher Hussiani, the caretaker of the Arab Studies Society (Orient House) and part owner of the building, reported that, on August 4, he received a closure renewal notice, signed by the GOI on August 1. (Note: The World Health Organization began renting the second floor of the Orient House building in June, and around 25 WHO employees have set up offices. They report that the Israel National Police (INP) conduct daily inspections to ensure that the first floor -- the former Orient House -- remains sealed.) Azzam Abu Soud, Director of the Chamber of Commerce in East Jerusalem, said on August 4 that he has not yet received a notice, but said he expects the plans to continue the practice of renewing the closure order.

[¶](#)12. (SBU) The original closure orders were issued by the Israeli Ministry of Internal Security in August 2001, on the grounds that the institutions were operating on behalf of the Palestinian Authority (PA) in Jerusalem, in violation of the Oslo accords. The closure has been renewed every six months since 2001, most recently in late January 2009.

[¶](#)13. (SBU) Contacts also report that the Nidal Center for Community Development, a Palestinian institution in the Old City that provided youth services, was ordered closed by the GOI in July 2009. Press and contacts reported that the INP closed at least ten cultural events in East Jerusalem -- including a balloon launching, a Mother's Day party, and a press conference -- between March and July 2009, on the grounds that these events were sponsored by the PA as part of the "Arab Cultural Capital 2009" festivities. The Palestine Housing Council, an East Jerusalem institution closed by the GOI in mid-2007, was permitted to re-open in December 2008 (ref B).

WALLES